

**PUBLIC SCHOOL 15 (DANIEL D. TOMPKINS SCHOOL)** (now Staten Island Area Office, Office of Building Services, Division of School Facilities, New York City Board of Education), 98 Grant Street (aka 149 St. Paul's Avenue), Tompkinsville, Staten Island. Built 1897-98; Edward A. Sargent, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 506, Lot 81.

On October 1, 1991, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Public School 15 (Daniel D. Tompkins School) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 14).<sup>1</sup> The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nine witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Preservation League of Staten Island and the Municipal Art Society. A representative of Borough President Guy V. Molinari read a statement expressing concerns about public school designations.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Commission received a letter from the executive director of the Staten Island Historical Society in support of designation.

#### Summary

Serving the historic community of Tompkinsville in Staten Island, Public School 15 was built in 1897-98 as the Middletown Township District School No. 1, on the same site at the corner of Grant Street and St. Paul's Avenue on which a public school has stood since 1855. After completion it became Public School 15, following Staten Island's consolidation into New York City in January 1898. The school was designed by Edward A. Sargent, a Staten Island resident and one of its most notable architects at the end of the nineteenth century. Of the three schools in Staten Island designed by Sargent, only Public School 15



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survives. Faced in rough-textured burnt red brick with terra-cotta and stone bandcourses and trim, Public School 15 is distinguished by an intricate surround of brick and terra cotta at the main entrance facing St. Paul's Avenue, chamfered pavilions on the front and sides, and Queen Anne style windows. Public School 15 was built with a prominent clock tower placed on the Grant Street side of the building. In 1916 it was named the Daniel D. Tompkins School, after the community's founder and most prominent resident. The building is currently the Staten Island Area Office, Office of Building Services, Division of School Facilities, New York City Board of Education. It remains one of Staten Island's most distinctive late-nineteenth-century public structures.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Tompkinsville and Daniel D. Tompkins<sup>3</sup>

Located at the northeastern end of Staten Island, south of the ferry terminal at St. George, Tompkinsville (named after Daniel D. Tompkins) is one of the island's most historic communities.<sup>4</sup> During the eighteenth century much of this area was part of the Duxbury Glebe of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, bequeathed by Ellis Duxbury in 1718. Development of the village during the nineteenth century was influenced by the presence of several institutions of the state and federal governments,<sup>5</sup> the efforts and investments of Daniel D. Tompkins, and major improvements in transportation. Tompkins (1774-1825),<sup>6</sup> governor of New York and later vice president of the United States, became attracted to Staten Island after visits related to fort construction during the War of 1812. With extensive land purchases that included most of the glebe, he moved to Staten Island and began the development of the village of Tompkinsville in 1815, and was also involved in two transportation initiatives.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, it was said that "the Staten Island venture, however inviting and well-intentioned . . . would prove to be one of the most disastrous mistakes that Tompkins ever made,"<sup>8</sup> and Tompkinsville's incorporation charter was revoked after his death in 1825. By the early 1840s, however, "the whole eastern shore [was] becoming almost a continued [sic] village from the Quarantine to the Signal poles at Fort Richmond being occupied by country seats and town plots."<sup>9</sup> Middletown Township was created in 1860 from sections of the townships of Castleton and Southfield.<sup>10</sup> Horse-drawn rail service began in 1863 from Tompkinsville to Port Richmond. Staten Island's second Episcopal parish, St. Paul's Episcopal Church (organized in 1833), built a new church in 1866-70 at 217-225 St. Paul's Avenue in Tompkinsville.<sup>11</sup> The creation of the Staten Island Rapid Transit Railroad Co. through the merger of competing ferry lines, and the completion of the St. George ferry pier and railroad lines running in both shore directions in 1886,<sup>12</sup> spurred an intensive period of speculation and construction that lasted into the 1890s.<sup>13</sup> The increase in population brought the need for new school construction.

### Common Schools in the Nineteenth Century in Staten Island<sup>14</sup>

Schools in Staten Island were under the jurisdiction of the Richmond County School Commissioner and the State of New York prior to

consolidation in 1898. Though thought of today as public schools – as opposed to private or parochial institutions – they were known as "common schools" throughout the nineteenth century. In 1854, local school districts, organized and numbered by township, were given the power to select sites for schools and raise the money to construct and maintain schoolhouses, in addition to other school supervisory powers. Common school districts received financial support from state sources and school district taxes; some continued to use the rate bill system and assessed parents according to the number of children they sent to school. In Tompkinsville, a small Italianate style schoolhouse with a belfry was built in 1855 at St. Paul's Avenue and Grant Street.<sup>15</sup> The Township of Middletown eventually had five school districts, which were numbered in order of establishment.<sup>16</sup>

During the last half of the nineteenth century, presumably all of the school districts on Staten Island erected schoolhouses, which varied widely since each school district was responsible for its own facilities. The increase in the population on the island throughout that period, however, taxed the adequacy of even the best-planned and largest facilities. In 1883 the village of Tompkinsville responded to the problem with the construction of a new schoolhouse. During the late 1880s, the inadequate and overcrowded conditions of many of the schools on Staten Island prompted the School Commissioner to report that the public was generally taking a greater interest in schools and education.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1890s more than twenty district schoolhouses were erected in Staten Island.<sup>18</sup> The growing population and the enforcement of the state's Compulsory Education Act, adopted in 1894, prompted the school construction boom. Richmond County School Commissioner Julia K. West, who held the position from 1894 to 1898, oversaw most of this construction. West noted in her first annual report that the schools in the county were "very much overcrowded, and some of them unfit for use."<sup>19</sup> The work in Staten Island occurred at the same time as the extensive construction of schoolhouses throughout New York State during the 1890s. According to a Department of Public Instruction annual report, schoolhouse construction emphasized "aesthetics, convenience, and hygienic provisions" and involved such a spirit of rivalry between districts to erect the most attractive school buildings that even the most

parsimonious districts and stolid trustees were unable to oppose the progressive aspect of the times.<sup>20</sup> A state publication, *Recent School Architecture*, in 1897 further pointed out that "it is a source of congratulation that in spite of the financial depression and straitened business conditions of the past three years there has been no decrease in the number and excellence of school buildings erected each year throughout the State."<sup>21</sup>

The construction of a school in Staten Island prior to consolidation in 1898 was an exercise in local government that was directed by the Board of Trustees of the school district, but included all voting residents of the district.<sup>22</sup> The trustees would call a special meeting to entertain the question of constructing a new building, and if the vote was favorable, a committee was appointed to consider sites (if necessary) and make a recommendation. A building committee – usually the trustees and several additional members of the community – was appointed; sometimes the trustees commissioned an architect to provide plans and specifications, while in other situations, particularly for larger building projects, the trustees acquired plans through a competition. Once plans were adopted, the district usually issued revenue bonds to finance construction.

#### The Architect<sup>23</sup>

Edward Alfred Sargent<sup>24</sup> (1842-1914), who designed Public School 15, was one of Staten Island's most notable architects at the end of the nineteenth century. Born in Hastings, England, he received training in Dublin, worked in London, and immigrated to New York City in 1867. He was elected president in 1869 of the New York Draughtman's Association, an architectural organization for the "general promotion of Arts and Sciences," and in 1870 began an architectural practice in Manhattan. In 1871 he married Mary Augusta Doubleday, niece of the reputed inventor of baseball. Sargent became well known as an architectural delineator, producing skilled renderings included in a variety of publications of the work of an impressive list of prominent architects.<sup>25</sup> He was also associated with a number of architects over the years. After 1880 Sargent became a permanent resident of Staten Island, living in Tompkinsville until around 1905. He is said to have designed over three hundred suburban and country residences,<sup>26</sup> notably in the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles; his residences of the 1880s-90s are among the best examples of those styles in Staten Island, and a significant grouping is located in the New Brighton-

St. George Historic District. Among his last works around 1905 was a group of houses in Rosebank, where he lived at the end of his life. Sargent was also responsible for church and institutional commissions.<sup>27</sup> He designed three public schools in Staten Island, each having a prominent clock tower: Castleton Township District School No. 2 (later Public School 18) (1889-91, demolished), West New Brighton; Castleton Township District School No. 4 (later Public School 16) (1894-96, demolished), New Brighton; and Public School 15 (1897-98), Tompkinsville. Of these Sargent-designed schools, only Public School 15 survives.

#### Middletown Township District School No. 1/ Public School 15<sup>28</sup>

In February 1897 the Board of Trustees of Middletown School District No. 1 received a request from School Commissioner Julia West that she be informed of "what steps have been taken regarding the building of an addition"<sup>29</sup> to the schoolhouse of 1883, which "had become far too small for the needs of the rapidly growing district."<sup>30</sup> In response, the trustees called special district meetings in April for the purpose, instead, of discussing a property tax for the construction of a new school, demolition of the old school building, and the purchase of additional land at the school site (resolutions on all these items passed). The building committee issued invitations in May to seven architects to submit designs, the winner of the competition to also superintend the construction.<sup>31</sup> The architects, all of whom accepted the invitation, were instructed to produce a building that would cost \$37,000 excluding architect's fees. With the purchase of additional lots approved, the district borrowed \$45,000 through the sale of bonds. The building committee in June recommended the selection of E.A. Sargent as architect, an action then taken by the trustees. A week later, Sargent appeared before the board to recommend the "changing of the Building so as to front on St. Paul's Avenue instead of Grant Street," which the trustees approved.<sup>32</sup> Specifications were prepared by July and notices to contractors sent out; in August bids were received and Stapleton carpenter/builder Henry Spruck was selected as contractor.

Construction moved swiftly after the school's cornerstone was laid on October 12, 1897. The *Staten Islander* reported that the trustees "had deferred the erection of a new building for some time in view of an economical spirit," but that the building "promises to be one of the finest and most

complete school buildings in the state ... all modern improvements, appliances, heating and ventilating devices have been taken advantage of."<sup>33</sup> Stone for the building was supplied by J. August Feist, son of the owner of the K. Feist bluestone works in Tompkinsville, while J.L. Mott Iron Works of Mott Haven, the Bronx, produced the iron.<sup>34</sup> The trustees authorized the closing of school, then held in the leased Staten Island Academy, in December for the proposed opening of the new building on January 10, 1898. Construction was not actually completed until the end of January, and students occupied the building on January 24. Payments for the school totaled over \$51,000, including the furniture.

The *Staten Islander* considered the school "the pride of the people of that locality" and boasted that "these school houses in Richmond borough are fully up to the New York city standard, and place our community on a par with the others composing the greater city as regards modern educational facilities."<sup>35</sup> The school, three stories (plus basement) with a clock tower, accommodated twelve classrooms, as well as the principal's office, a library, an assembly room that could seat 600 people, and playrooms. Considered particularly well-illuminated with six to eight windows per classroom (some on chamfered corners), the building was also fitted for both gas and electricity. Middletown Township District School No. 1 became Public School 15 following Staten Island's consolidation into New York City in January 1898, at which time all of Staten Island's public schools were renumbered.

#### Later History<sup>36</sup>

Public School 15 officially received the name "Daniel D. Tompkins School" on March 22, 1916, in recognition of the community's founder and most prominent resident, and as part of a school naming program. It continued in use as an elementary school through 1965. In 1967 the building began use as the New York City Board of Education's Richmond Area Maintenance Office, an Annex to the Brooklyn South Office, Division of Maintenance and Operations, Office of School Buildings. The building is currently the Staten Island Area Office, Office of Building Services, Division of School Facilities, New York City Board of Education. The upper portion of the clock tower was removed for reconstruction in October 1996 by the New York City School Construction Authority. Today Public School 15 is recognized as one of Staten Island's most distinctive late-nineteenth-century public structures.

#### Description<sup>37</sup>

Public School 15 is a three-story structure set on a high basement, designed with a prominent clock tower. Faced in rough-textured burnt red brick, it is ornamented with terra-cotta bandcourses and trim, as well as channeled brick on the third-story pilasters, and has a stone watertable and stone sills and lintels on the basement level. The building has two pavilions with chamfered corners on the front and one on each side, as well as a rear rectangular section. The main entrance faces St. Paul's Avenue, while each side has a secondary entrance (that facing Grant Street has the tower above). All windows have double-hung wood sash, most with multiple panes of the Queen Anne style (and separate transoms with similar sash), while many third-story window sash are nine-over-nine. (Historic photographs indicate that these were originally of the Queen Anne variety, with segmental transoms, and were changed after 1934.) Windows on the first story and some on the basement level are covered by wire-mesh grilles. The school, set back on its northward- and eastward-sloping site, allows for a full basement story on the east end. The building has been unsympathetically repointed in recent years.

St. Paul's Avenue Facade: This facade contains the main entrance at the first story flanked by two three-story projecting pavilions. The entrance surround has terra-cotta pilasters with foliate panels supporting a stepped brick segmental arch with foliated spandrels (bearing the dates "1855" and "1897"). Set within the entrance are a multi-pane transom and paneled wood double doors. The terra-cotta entablature/balustrade above the doorway has cartouches with the inscriptions "Trustees/Michael W. Murphy/Benjamin F. Davis/Karl Feist" and "Architect/E.A. Sargent/Contractor/Henry Spruck." Between these cartouches is a tablet with the inscription "Public School 15" (now covered by a wooden sign with the facility name). The entrance was originally flanked by two bracketed light fixtures with globes (later removed).<sup>38</sup> A polished granite cornerstone with the inscription "Presented by / 1897 / the Pupils" is located on the north corner. Basement windows north of the entrance have been covered. The recessed central section rises above and behind the entrance.

Grant Street Facade: This facade has a central three-story pavilion flanked on the west by the clock tower containing a secondary entrance. The



entrance (covered with a wooden enclosure at the time of designation) is round-arched with a transom and double doors, and is surmounted by a terra-cotta plaque with the inscription "Boys." The three-bay east end has continuous pilasters and a central basement-level metal door (with a transom) flanked by two openings filled with brick. Clock Tower: The masonry lower section of the tower has continuous pilasters and slit windows, and was originally terminated on each side by a band of wooden louvers framed by entablatures and two levels of triple corner pilasters with ball finials. The upper portion of the tower was removed prior to designation.<sup>39</sup> The chamfered wooden portion of the tower was originally sheathed in galvanized iron and held a four-faced clock (produced by John C. Potthoff and the E. Howard Watch Co.).<sup>40</sup> The convex domical roof, covered in standing-seam metal, had a finial (an original weathervane had been removed at an earlier date).

South Facade: This facade has a three-story central pavilion flanked on the west by a secondary entrance. As constructed, the entrance was through an enclosed vestibule structure (this area was covered with a wooden enclosure at the time of designation). The doorway is presumably similar to that on the north side, round-arched with a transom and double doors; it is surmounted by a terra-cotta plaque with the inscription "Girls." Above the entrance are two levels of slit windows corresponding to interior stairs. The three-bay east end has continuous pilasters. Basement-level windows are covered.

East Facade: The rear facade of the building consists of a mostly plain brick wall that terminates in two large central chimneys, which is flanked by semi-enclosed fire escapes. The center portion has basement-level openings filled with brick, two windows on the second and third stories, and small

third-story windows flanking the chimneys. Fire escapes, first added to the building in 1905,<sup>41</sup> were replaced in 1936 by ones of steel and wire mesh; doors and windows opening onto the fire escapes were also replaced with kalamein ones (Alt. 546-1936).

Roof: The mansard roof, with projecting eaves and a simple molded cornice, was originally covered with slate (now asphalt shingles). The hipped roofs over the pavilions (finials of which have been removed) intersect the main roof.

Site Features: The school lot, located on the corner, has frontages of approximately 176 feet on St. Paul's Avenue and 211 feet on Grant Street. The property surrounding the school was surveyed in 1930,<sup>42</sup> at which time there was a fence around the property, a sidewalk that curved to the main entrance from the corner, steps with cheek walls leading to that entrance, and little of the playground was paved. Under Walter C. Martin, Superintendent of School Buildings, changes were made to the schoolyard in 1931 (Alt. 386-1931). The playground was cemented on the south and east (with concrete walks and steps leading to it), the main entrance approach was re-graded with a concrete walk covering the steps, front areaway walls were built up, a chainlink fence was placed around the playground, a wrought-iron picket fence was placed along the street frontages of the property and lining the sidewalks, and the bluestone steps of the north entrance were rebuilt. The areas in front of the main facade and western portion of the north facade remain planted.

Report prepared by  
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## NOTES

1. The building was heard as the Middletown Township District School No. 2 [sic].
2. Molinari's written statement said, in part: "I am also concerned about the various public schools designated. Is the city and the Board of Education willing and able to accept landmark designation and the restrictions it imposes. Perhaps the Board of Education should be formally entrusted to preserve the historic structures under its jurisdiction, thus allowing flexibility in any renovations."
3. This section is based on: Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis, *Staten Island and Its People: A History 1609-1929* (New York: Lewis Histl. Publg. Co., 1930), 3 vols.; Henry G. Steinmeyer, *Staten Island 1524-1898* (New York: S.I. Histl. Soc., 1987); LPC, *St. Paul's Memorial Church and Rectory Designation Report* (LP-0891), *Old Administration Building (Third District U.S. Lighthouse Depot), U.S. Coast Guard Station*

*Designation Report* (LP-1112), prepared by James Dibble, and *Seaman's Retreat Main Building Designation Report* (LP-1395), prepared by Shirley Zavin (New York: City of New York, 1975, 1980, and 1985); Dorothy Valentine Smith, *Staten Island: Gateway to New York* (New York: Chilton Book Co., 1970), 99-103; NYC Board of Education, *Staten Island: A Resource Manual for School and Community* (New York: Bd. of Education, 1964); "Daniel D. Tompkins," *Dictionary of American Biography* 9, Dumas Malone, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 583-584; Mariam Touba, "Daniel D. Tompkins," and Barnett Shepherd, "Tompkinsville," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 1190; Ray W. Irwin, *Daniel D. Tompkins: Governor of New York and Vice President of the United States* (New York: New-York Histl. Soc., 1968); Ira K. Morris, *Morris's Memorial History of Staten Island, New York 2* (New York: Winthrop Press, 1900), 440.

4. In the seventeenth century this vicinity was known as the "Watering Place" after a spring and landing at which outbound ships would fill their water supply. Ferry service was started to New York from this location in 1708, and Staten Island's first stagecoach route, King's Road (now Richmond and Amboy Roads) led from here to Billopp's (Tottenville).
5. In 1799 the State of New York acquired a thirty-acre tract of glebe land along the shore at the head of Bay Street, intended for a Marine Hospital and quarantine station; quarantine buildings were constructed c. 1819-23. New York's quarantine was originally located on Bedloe's Island. Contagious and infectious persons were quarantined awaiting removal to a hospital. In the period of 1847-51, over one million immigrants arrived in New York City, many with diseases. [Steinmeyer, 74.] The U.S. government obtained five acres of this land in 1814, with part set aside for a Revenue Station for the Port of New York (located here until 1868); the U.S. Coast Guard and a regional lighthouse depot were also maintained here during the early part of the century. Local citizens, however, concerned over the years about the spread of yellow fever, finally burned the quarantine hospital in 1858. The Revenue Station became the Third District Light-House Depot (built c. 1865-71). The main building of Seaman's Retreat, authorized as a hospital for the care of merchant seamen, was built by the state in 1834-37 (expanded in 1848-53) just south of Tompkinsville. In 1882 the New York Marine Society acquired Seaman's Retreat and leased it the following year to the federal government for use as a U.S. Marine Hospital. The Depot building is a designated New York City Landmark. From 1939 until 1966 the Light-House Depot became the Administration Building of the U.S. Coast Guard Station, located there prior to its removal to Governors Island. The Seaman's Retreat main building and physician-in-chief's residence are also designated New York City Landmarks. From 1951 to 1981 a U.S. Public Health Service Hospital, it then became Bayley-Seton Hospital.
6. Tompkins, a graduate of Columbia College (1795) and a well-connected lawyer, became a state supreme court associate justice in 1804. Elected governor of New York in 1807 and reelected three times, he is credited with the genesis of the state's public school system in 1812 with the creation of publicly-funded local districts, as well as passage in 1817 of a law that led to abolition of slavery in the state. Tompkins also performed a crucial role during the War of 1812, mobilizing a militia and civilian work crews, backing loans for the war effort with his own credit, and supervising land cession and construction of forts in the New York harbor. From 1817 to 1825 Tompkins served as vice president of the United States under President James Monroe.
7. The Richmond Turnpike Co., incorporated in 1816, built a new stage road (now Victory Blvd.) across the island to the New Blazing Star ferry, providing a shorter route from New York to Philadelphia. The first steam ferry line to Manhattan, from the quarantine landing to Whitehall, was started in 1817.
8. Irwin, 219. Tompkins also assisted in founding the Reformed Dutch Church in 1820 near the quarantine. His last years were spent in ill physical and financial health, as he attempted to receive compensation for his expenses during the war.
9. Samuel Ackerly in 1842, cited in Steinmeyer, 62.
10. These townships were formed in 1788.
11. Designed by Edward T. Potter, the church is a designated New York City Landmark.
12. The Tompkinsville railroad station is located at Victory Blvd. east of Bay St.

13. Tompkinsville was further affected by its proximity to St. George in the early twentieth century, when the borough's municipal civic and judicial center moved here.
14. This section is based on LPC, *Westfield Township District School No. 7 Designation Report* (LP-1876), prepared by Betsy Bradley (New York: City of New York, 1995), which consulted the following: New York State, Dept. of Public Instruction, *Annual Report* (hereafter *Annual Report*) (Albany, 1876-1878), and "The Schools of New York – A Glance at the Common School System of the Empire State" (Albany, 1893); S.S. Randall, "Report of the Commission for Embodying in a Single Act a Common School Code for the State of New York; pursuant to a Resolution of the Assembly of 10 July 1851 and transmitted to the Legislature January 7, 1852". Additionally, *Staten Island: A Resource Manual*; Vernon B. Hampton, "From the Hickory Rod to Progressive Education in Staten Island Schools," in *The History of Staten Island Public Schools* (New York: S.I. Teachers Assn., c. 1942); *Annual Report* (1893-1898), each including a report from the Richmond County School Commissioner.
15. This school was originally the Castleton Township District School No. 3, but became the Middletown Township District School No. 1 with the creation of the township in 1860. Tompkinsville had had several private schools in the early nineteenth century and by 1815 had a public school, personal interest in which was reportedly shown by Daniel Tompkins [Hampton, 5, and *Staten Island: A Resource Manual*, 72].
16. According to *Staten Island: A Resource Manual*, 129, and Richard Bayles, ed., *History of Richmond County, (Staten Island), New York* (New York: L.E. Preston & Co., 1887), 449, the school districts in Middletown Township were: No. 1, Tompkinsville; No. 2, Stapleton; No. 3, Garretsons (Dongan Hills/Todt Hill); No. 4, Egbertville (New Dorp); and No. 5, Egbertville.
17. Maurice Denzil Hodgen, "A High School in Perspective: The Character of High School Life on Staten Island. 1881-1926," (Ph. D. diss., Teachers' College, Columbia Univ., 1959), 25; *Annual Report* (1876, 1878). Cited in LPC (Bradley).
18. In 1898 Staten Island had 29 school districts; the following year there were eleven brick schoolhouses and nineteen wood frame ones.
19. *Annual Report* (1894), 569. West was an active member of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the State Prison Association, the Richmond County branch of the State Charities Aid Society, the S.R. Smith Infirmary, and the Public Education Association, according to the *Staten Island Independent*, Nov. 4, 1893.
20. *Annual Report* (1894), 11.
21. N.Y. State, Dept. of Public Instruction, *Recent School Architecture* (Albany: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co., 1897), 4.
22. The description of this process is based on the record and account books of Westfield Township School Districts Nos. 5 and 7, in the collection of NYC Municipal Archives, and notices in the *Staten Island Independent* (1893-1894), the *Richmond County Standard*, Mar. 24, 1894, and *The Real Estate Record & Guide* 57 (Mar. 7, 1896), 387. Cited in LPC (Bradley).
23. This section is based on: Marjorie Johnson, wife of Sargent's grandson, telephone interview, Oct. 1996; Sargent obit., *NYT*, Feb. 26, 1914, 9, and *Staten Island World* and *Staten Islander*, Feb. 28, 1914; E.A. Sargent Collection, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences; LPC, Sargent files, and *New Brighton-St. George Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1883), prepared by Gale Harris (New York: City of New York, 1994); Robert M. Fogelson, *America's Armories: Architecture, Society, and Public Order* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), 135-137; "Foundation Stone Laid" [Peabody Home], *[Bronx] Borough Record*, Dec. 28, 1901; "A Notable Yacht Club House," *Harper's Weekly*, July 2, 1887, 476; "The New-York Draughtsmen's Association," *NYT*, Apr. 16, 1869; Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Pres. of Archl. Records, 1979); James Ward, *Architects in Practice New York City 1900-1940* (New York: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Records, 1989).
24. Sargent was born with the name Ebenezer but changed it to Edward in 1870.
25. These included J.C. Cady, Charles D. Gambrell, Charles C. Haight, George E. Harney, Henry H. Holly,

- Richard M. Hunt, George B. Post, William A. Potter, Calvert Vaux, and Frederick C. Withers. Sargent's rendering of the Cooper Union building was included in the center of the "Cooper Testimonial" (1871), a carved wood monument still located on the wall in the lobby of the building.
26. One of his most prominent residential commissions was Lydenhurst (c. 1882, destroyed 1907), John Wanamaker's country estate in Jenkintown, Pa.
  27. Among these were Trinity Episcopal Church (1880, destroyed), Bayonne, N.J.; American Yacht Club (1887, demolished), Rye Neck, N.Y.; the castellated Ninth Regiment Armory (1894-97, with William A. Cable, demolished), 125 West 14th Street, Manhattan; Peabody Home for Aged and Indigent Women (1901-02), 2064 Boston Road, the Bronx; Masonic Temple, Stapleton; Staten Island Athletic Club Boathouse; and Staten Island Yacht Club.
  28. This section is based on: Town of Middletown, *Minutes of the Board of Trustees of School District No. 1* [hereafter *Minutes*] (1897-98), vol. 416, and *School Budget Ledger* (1896-98), vol. 401, NYC Municipal Archives; "Tompkinsville's New School," *Staten Islander*, Sept. 8, 1897, 5; "Praise for Progress. Education's Corner-stone Laid in Tompkinsville," *Staten Islander*, Oct. 13, 1897, 1; "A Handsome New School," *Staten Islander*, Jan. 29, 1898, 1; "Das Werk lobt die Meister" ["The Work Praises the Masters"], *Deutsche Staten Island Post* [n.d.]; "A Credit to Richmond. Tompkinsville's Fine School House," *Staten Islander*, Feb. 26, 1898, 1 and 8; Julia K. West, "Richmond County School Commissioner's Report," in *Annual Report* (1898), 364-365; NYC Bd. of Education, *Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools* (1899-1918), *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York* (1898-1908); and *Annual Financial and Statistical Report of the Transactions of the Board of Education of the City of New York* (1906-16, 1929).
  29. *Minutes*, Feb. 23, 1897.
  30. *Staten Islander*, Feb. 26, 1898, 8.
  31. The architects selected were Charles Schmeiser and Paul Kuhne, both of Stapleton; E.A. Sargent of Tompkinsville; and C. Powell Karr, Mowbray & Uffinger, A.F. Leicht, and Wilson A. Potter, all of Manhattan.
  32. *Minutes*, June 25, 1897. A drawing by the architect, presumably the original presentation design for Middletown District School No. 1, depicts a larger building with the clock tower rising behind the main entrance, a scheme similar to that Sargent used for Public School 18 in West New Brighton.
  33. *Staten Islander*, Oct. 13, 1897, 1.
  34. *Staten Islander*, Feb. 26, 1898, 8. Karl Feist was also a member of the Board of Trustees of Middletown School District No. 1.
  35. *Staten Islander*, Feb. 26, 1898, 1.
  36. NYC Bd. of Education, *Official Directory of the Board of Education of the City of New York* (1964-1971); "Public School 15," File Card Box 3, NYC Bd. of Education Archives, Special Collections, Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia Univ.
  37. New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Staten Island, Plans, Permits and Dockets.
  38. The lamps were supplied by Archer & Pancoast Co. *Minutes*, Dec. 13, 1897.
  39. LPC issued a Notice of Review (97-0002) in July 1996 for the removal of the upper portion of the tower by the New York City School Construction Authority, which took place in October, as well as its reconstruction, employing new cast stone, masonry, and wood elements, a copper roof, and aluminum louvers.
  40. *Minutes*, Dec. 31, 1897.
  41. NYC Bd. of Education, *Minutes of the Committee on Buildings* (1905), 135-136.
  42. See "Survey of Site of Public School No. 15," Sept. 23, 1930, NYC Dept. of Buildings.

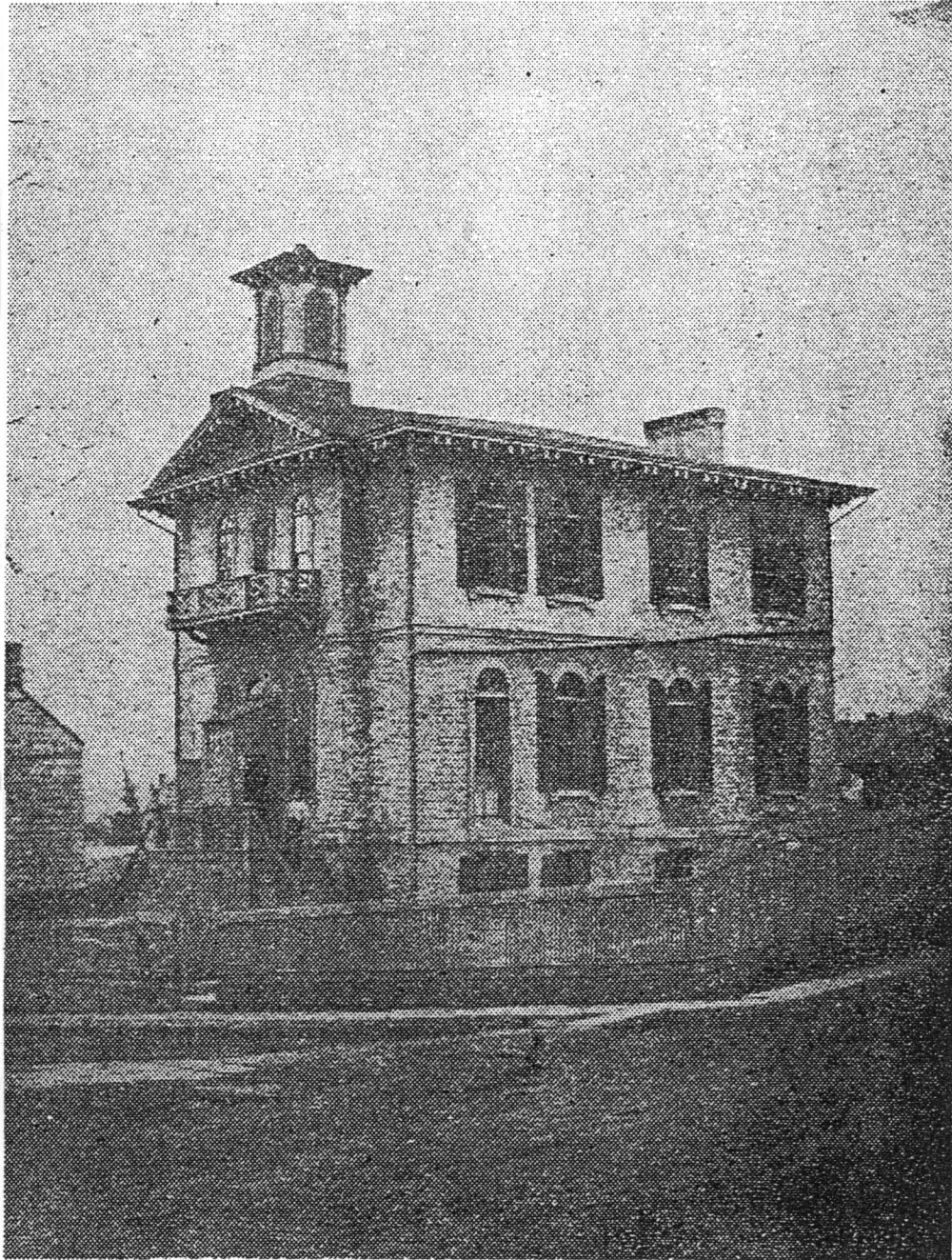


## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Public School 15 (Daniel D. Tompkins School) has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Public School 15 (Daniel D. Tompkins School), one of Staten Island's most distinctive late-nineteenth-century public structures, was built in 1897-98 as the Middletown Township District School No. 1; that the school was designed by Edward A. Sargent, a Staten Island resident and one of its most notable architects at the end of the nineteenth century, and is the only survivor of the three Sargent-designed schools in Staten Island; that it served the historic community of Tompkinsville, on the same site at the corner of Grant Street and St. Paul's Avenue on which a public school has stood since 1855; that after the building's completion, and following Staten Island's consolidation into New York City in January 1898, it became Public School 15; that, faced in rough-textured burnt red brick with terra-cotta and stone bandcourses and trim, Public School 15 is distinguished by an intricate surround of brick and terra cotta at the main entrance facing St. Paul's Avenue, chamfered pavilions on the front and sides, and Queen Anne style windows, and was built with a prominent clock tower placed on the Grant Street side of the building; that in 1916 it was named the Daniel D. Tompkins School, after the community's founder and most prominent resident; and that the building has continued to serve the New York City Board of Education as its Staten Island Area Office, Office of Building Services, Division of School Facilities.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Public School 15 (Daniel D. Tompkins School), 98 Grant Street (aka 149 St. Paul's Avenue), Tompkinsville, Borough of Staten Island, and designates Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 506, Lot 81, as its Landmark Site.

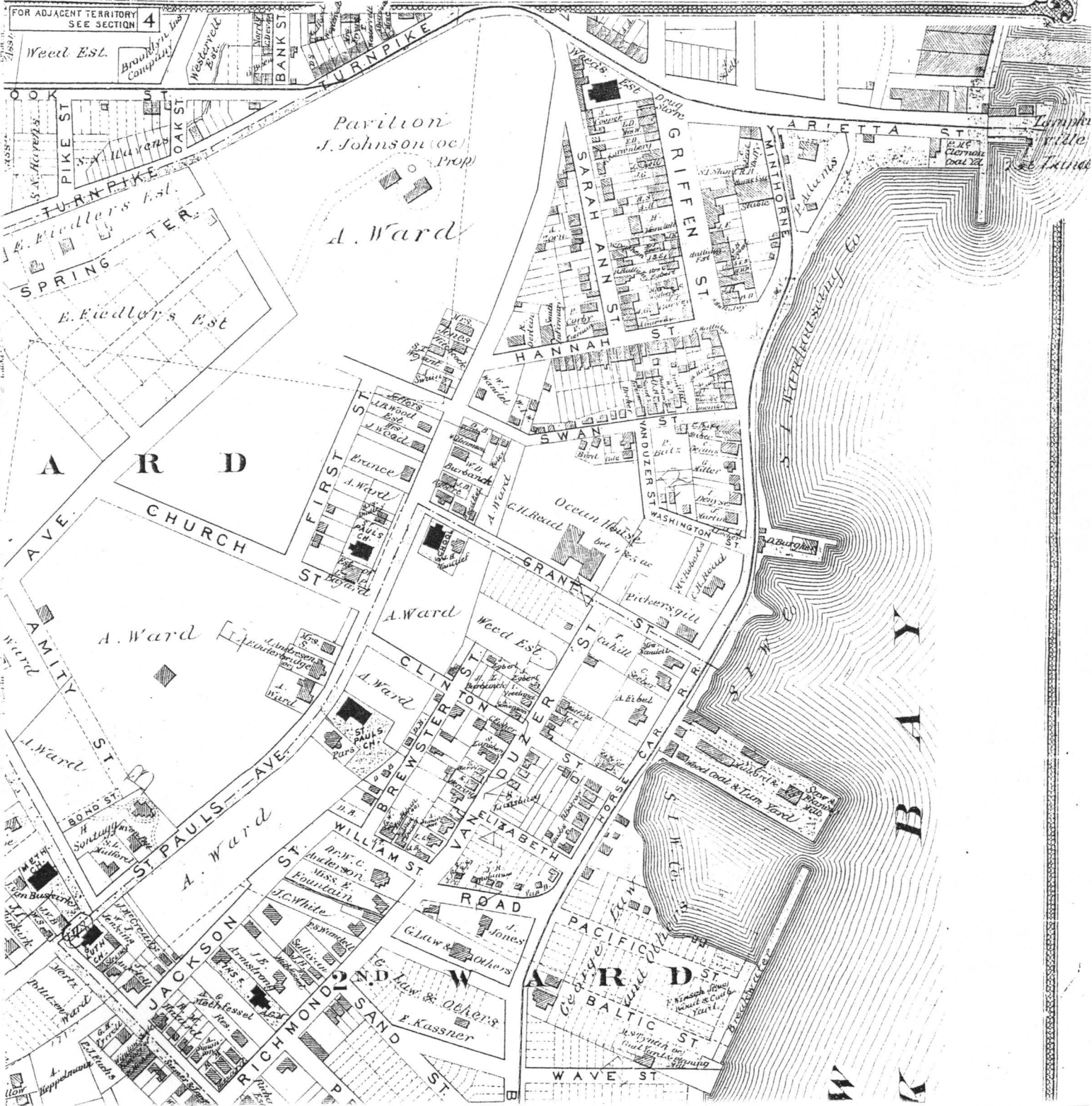


**Middletown Township District School No. 1** (built 1855), Tompkinsville  
Source: *Staten Island Advance* (Feb. 26, 1978)

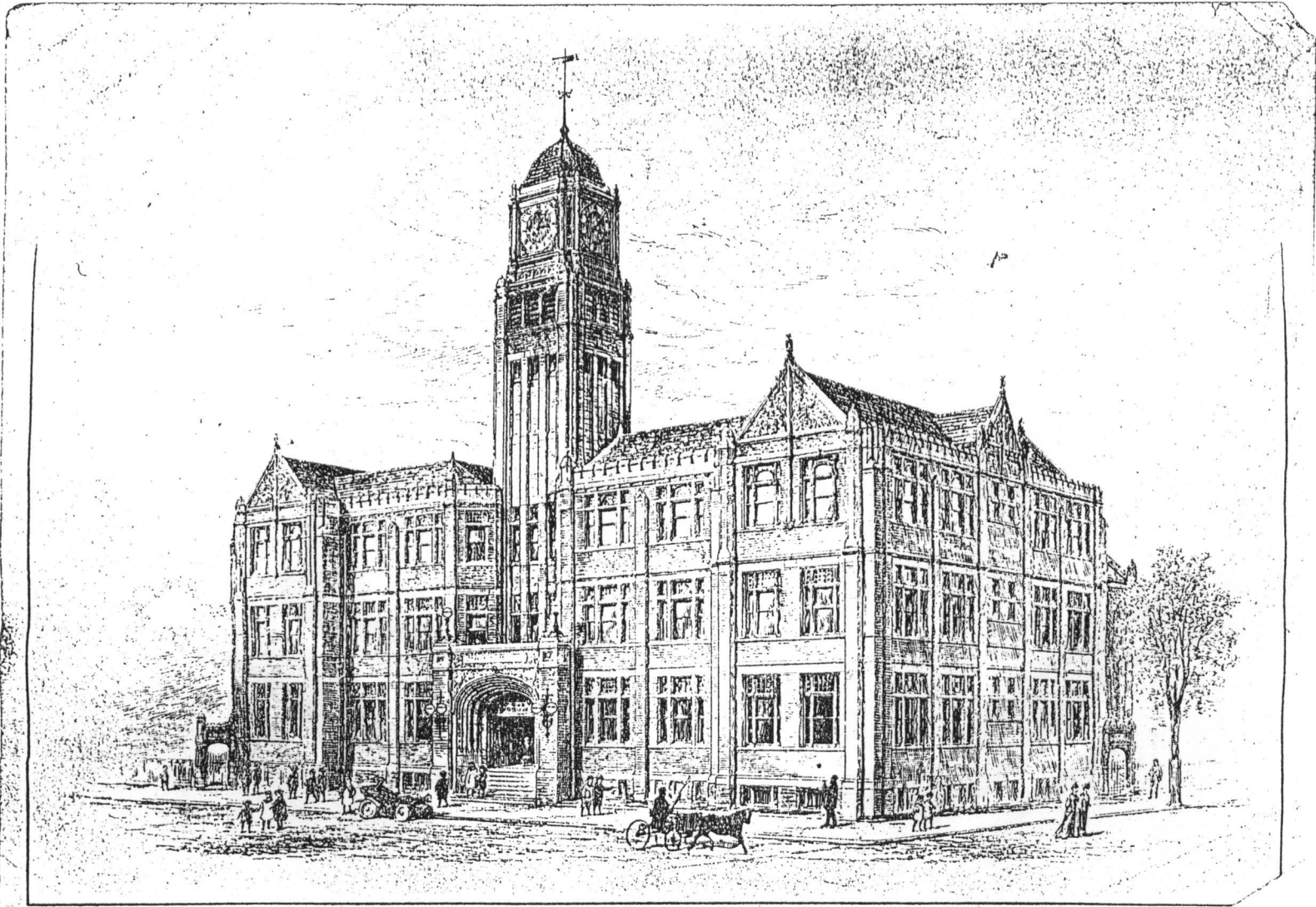


Scale 300 Feet to the inch

SECTION 8

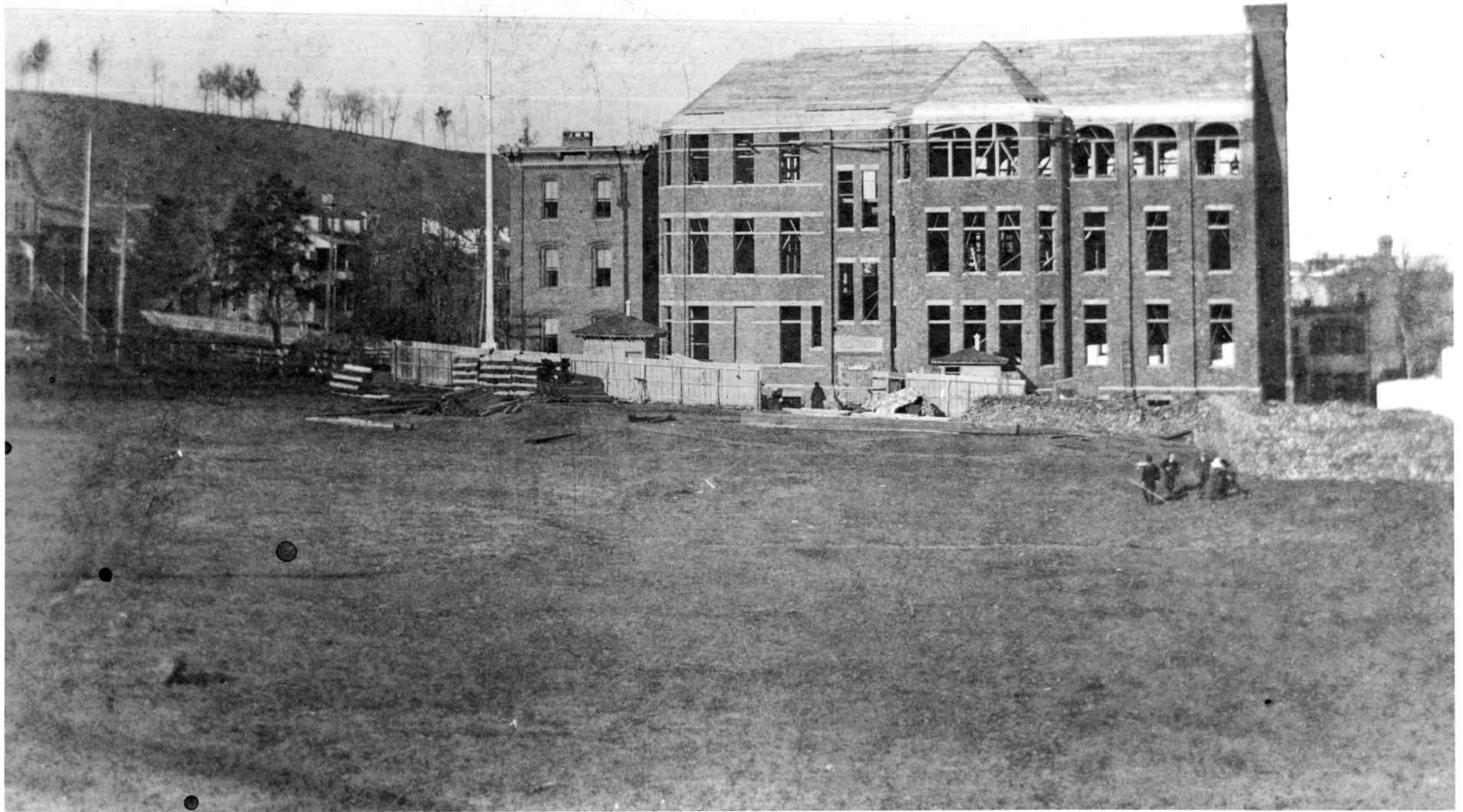


Map of Tompkinsville, Staten Island  
 Source: Beers Atlas of Richmond County (1874)



**E.A. Sargent Rendering**, presumed to be competition design for Middletown Township District  
School No. 1 (1897)  
Source: E.A. Sargent Collection, Marjorie Johnson





**Public School 15 under construction (1897)**  
Source: Staten Island Historical Society



**Public School 15 and Tompkinsville**  
Source: Postcard, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences



**Public School 15 (1898)**

Source: Staten Island Historical Society





**Public School 15 (1934)**

Source: NYC Bd. of Education Archives Photograph Collection, Special Collections, Millbank Meml. Library, Teachers College, Columbia University





**Public School 15 (1980)**  
Photo: LPC



**Public School 15**, St. Paul's Avenue facade  
Photo: Shockley



**Public School 15**, detail of windows  
Photo: Shockley





**Public School 15, south facade**  
Photo: Shockley, LPC

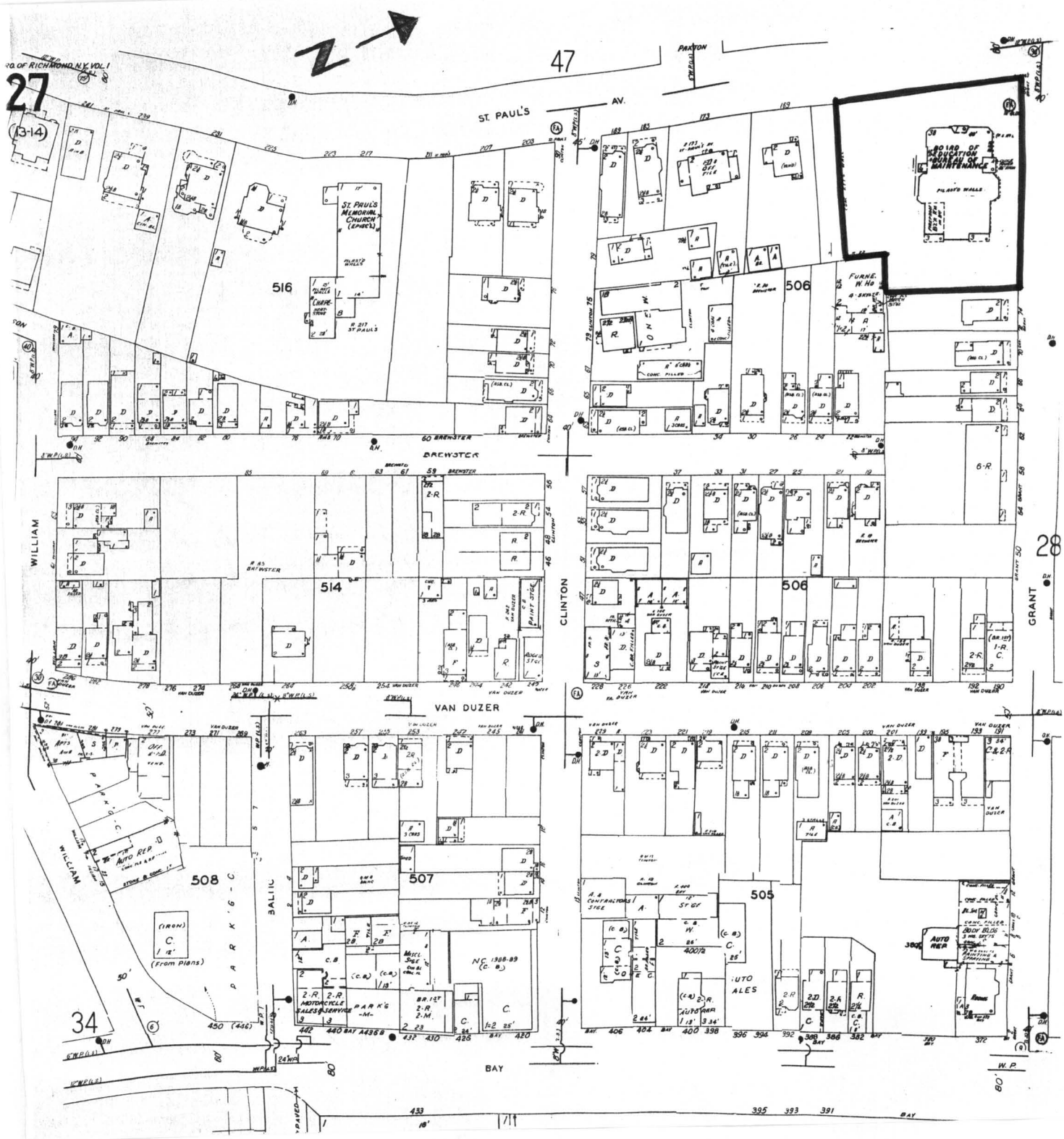




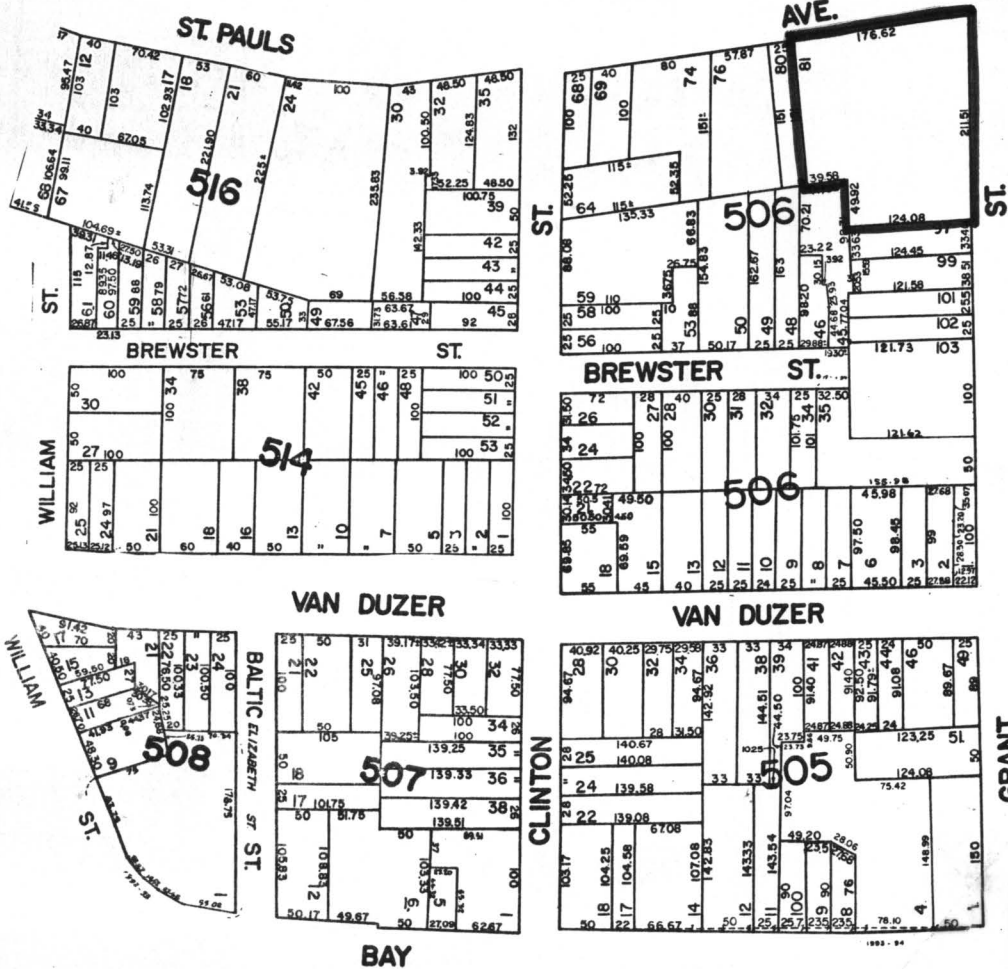
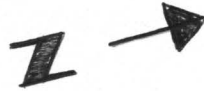
Public School 15, details of terra cotta above main entrance  
Photos: Shockley, LPC



**Public School 15**, main entrance (left) and east facade (right)  
Photos: Shockley, LPC



Public School 15  
 Source: Sanborn, *Building and Property Atlas of Staten Island, New York 1* (1994), pl. 27



Public School 15  
 Landmark Site: Staten Island Tax Map Block 506, Lot 81  
 Source: Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map